

Ames Historical Society

AMES • IOWA

FOUNDED 1980 AS AMES HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

Newsletter to Members 2005 WINTER.....ISSUE #1/4

The mission of the Ames Historical Society is to preserve local history and illuminate its stories.



Carr's Pool was built in 1926 by Emmet and Alpha Carr after citizens failed to pass a pool referendum. The Carr family owned the pool until 1973 when it was sold to the City of Ames. An exhibit featuring the Carr story is on display through January 16 at Ames Public Library, 515 Douglas.

Ames Historical Society Board:

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The Board meets the second Monday of each month at City Hall.

Ames Historical Society is an incorporated, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in state and local history through publications, programs, exhibitions and operation of an archive and historic site.

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The newsletter is published four times a year for AHS members. Comments & questions may be directed to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010 or e-mail above.

Hoggatt School is located on the grounds of Meeker School, near 18th and Burnett, Ames, IA. Open April 1 through October 31.

Join Us Saturday, January 15, 2005 Program on the Carr Family & Carr's Pool 10am, Ames Public Library Auditorium

Historical Society members, guests and area residents are invited to a program in conjunction with the exhibit – *Family Memories become Community Stories: The Carr Family & Carr's Pool* – on view through January 16 at the Library.



Above:
Alpha and Emmet Carr, 1939

Right:
Carr's Pool, 1929,
looking west

Program:
10am, Sat. Jan. 15 at
Ames Public Library
Auditorium



The program will relate the remarkable story of a unique Ames family, Emmet and Alpha Carr, and highlight their best-known ventures, raising over 80 foster children and building the first public swimming pool in Ames.

The program will include a dramatization of a radio interview by ACTORS members, Lynn Lloyd and Judy Brown. They will use an original script found in the collection of Carr family items donated by Emmet and Alpha's daughter, Donna Carr. Late in their lives, the Carrs received national media recognition for their support of the children of Ames.

Plan to Attend the Society's Annual Meeting Program: K.W. Brown – Civil War Stories 10am, Sat., Feb. 19, Ames Public Library Aud.

Ames author/editor, Janet Klaas, will read from her recently published book, *A Soldier's Life, 1861-1865: The Civil War Diaries and Reminiscences of Kendrick Wade Brown*. Engaging stories originally written by Brown as newspaper columns prove his skill as a master storyteller. Audience members will be treated to the daily flavors of life in the Union army during the Civil War.

Complimenting the program will be Civil War artifacts from the AHS collection, music and a costumed interpreter who will explain the features of a Union army uniform and equipment. Refreshments will be served.

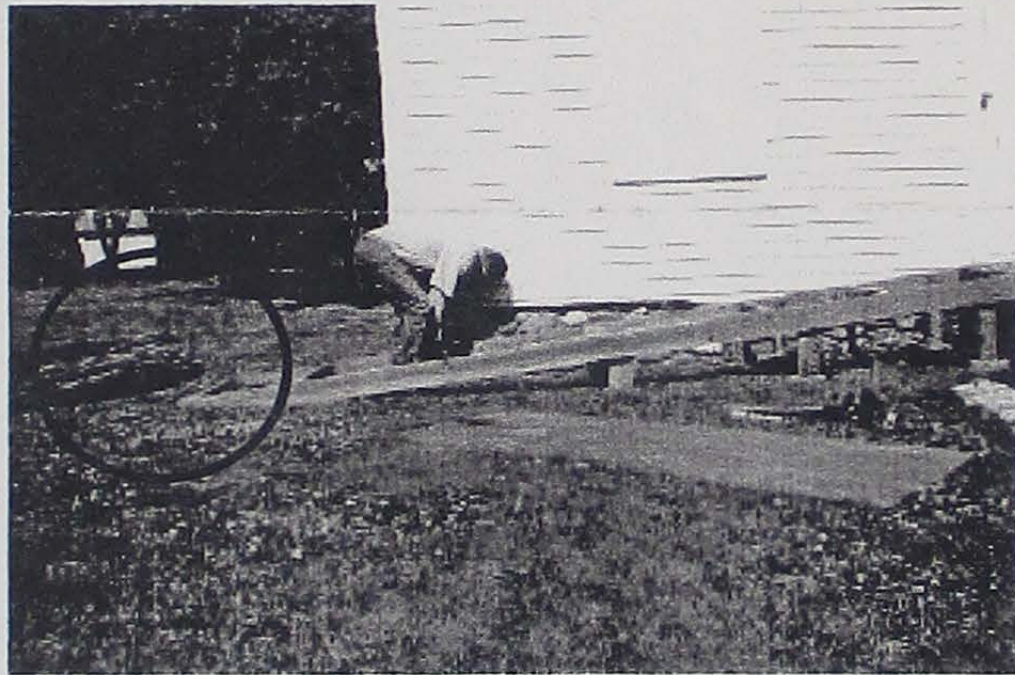
Hoggatt School Postscript: The Log at the End of the Ramp

by Jorgen Rasmussen, Board member/Hoggatt Comm.

One-room schoolhouses were typically built on field stone foundations. A few steps were needed to enter the door. When Hoggatt School was moved to the Meeker School grounds and restored in 1980, this pattern was replicated to add authenticity. As a result, those in wheel chairs could not access the school.

This summer, as part of the maintenance and repair work on Hoggatt, a crew directed by Rollie Struss, built a ramp to the entry platform at the door. Now there was access? Unfortunately, no!

The bottom end of ramp was too close to one of the logs used for an outside story circle. Various strong (?) men and women tried to move the log, but it would not so much as wiggle in response to their exertions.



Construction picture shows log and ramp.

AHS Board member, Margaret Elbert, recruited Dale Inglett of Central Landscape to solve the problem. While Dale is in sound physical shape, he was too smart to attempt the job unaided. He brought in the heavy equipment needed to reposition the stubborn log.

When Hoggatt opens for the 2005 season next May, the interior of the school will be accessible! Many thanks to Dale and his wife, Julie, who asked him to do it for us.

Great Iowa Depot Photographs

Train enthusiasts will enjoy an on-line pictorial overview of vintage Iowa train depots. Upon opening the site, one photo will appear - just click on that to get all 146 photos. The first image in the depot slide show? Ames!
http://pg.photos.yahoo.com/ph/sidvaughan/my_photos

WWII Project Update

by Cynthia Bennet, Board member/project director

Happy New Year to our AHS members and others! It is hard to believe another year has gone by, and even harder to believe that 2005 is the 60-year anniversary of the end of WWII. For those of you who remember that time, it must seem like a lifetime ago, and yet so familiar as Americans endure the climate of war again.

Progress on the "Ames Remembers World War II" Project continues. You will recall that we are interviewing anyone who lived in the Ames area during the WWII years in an effort to get a view of our community during that challenging time.

I had hoped to complete the interviews by the end of 2004. However, it should come as no surprise to hear that sometimes "real life" interferes with the best of intentions. My work for the Society for the History of Technology and teaching American history for DMACC, as well as my family and personal life, all take time. When I started the project it was as the employee of the society; now I do it as a volunteer. However, I am still just as dedicated to the project and the project's original goals. My revised plan is to complete the interviews by the end of June 2005.

I am so grateful to the nearly 30 people who have participated, and I plan to keep working my way through the list of people who have expressed an interest. So, the good news is that if you haven't heard from me you haven't been forgotten, and if you'd like to add your name to the list of participants there is still time. Now, more than ever, your recollections have value for our hurting and concerned country. You can reach me at 515-268-0356 with any questions or to add your name to the list.

Ames Native Named State Historical Society Curator

Jerome Thompson, Ames High School, 1970 and Iowa State University, 1974, was named State Curator on July 1, 2004. In this newly created position at the State Historical Society of Iowa, Thompson will act as a historical "extension agent", making regular visits to local organizations, helping with assessments and providing training and technical assistance - all with the goal of preserving and interpreting Iowa's historical resources.

Ames Historical Society News

Site Committee Meets

To meet the Society's goal of having a permanent museum facility in five years, the Board appointed a Site Committee to gather information and seek suitable property. An initial meeting of the Committee was convened in early December. This was first of what will be a series of sessions to work on this important goal. Members interested in this committee may still be involved by calling the Society at 515-232-2148.

Work Begins on Ames Tribune Photo Archive

The Society was pleased to receive a grant through the Iowa Historic Resource Development Program to begin first stages of processing the Ames Tribune Photo Archive. Volunteers have organized loose photographs, sorted, organized and indexed "mug shot" photos and news clippings of individuals and placed the information into a computer database. A non-traditional ISU student in history, Alice Mellen, has begun the labor-intensive task of identifying and cataloging the oldest negatives.

Ted Kooser, US Poet Laureate: An April Reading & Presentation



The public is invited to hear Ted Kooser read and speak on Thursday, April 21 at 8 pm in the Great Hall, Memorial Union, Iowa State University.

Born in Ames, in 1939, Kooser is one of Nebraska's most highly regarded poets. He earned a BS at Iowa State University in 1962 and the MA at the University of Nebraska in 1968. He currently

lives near the village of Garland, NE. He was named US Poet Laureate earlier this year.

Director Search to Re-Open

Eager to move several projects forward, the Society opened a search for a part time Executive Director earlier this year. Kelly Dobyns was hired this fall to fill the position. At the end of December, Kelly resigned the position to pursue another opportunity. AHS has accepted his decision and wishes him well. Board president, Kathy Svec, will handle Director matters while the process of filling the position is underway. This will likely begin after the annual meeting and the election of board members in February.

We Get Letters and E-Mail!

From Anita Wald-Tuttle, Ames transplant to California:

"I just finished reading the Fall newsletter. Good content, many memories - Sheldon-Munn, Carr's Pool, Ames Theater, and I even worked for the elder Ted Kooser in Younkers as a teenager! Wow! Haven't had time to browse the new website yet, but I'm sure there will be more memories there.

The Hoggatt School piece reminded me that I have some glazed clay marbles that either my father played with as a young boy or else his father had them back in Davenport, Iowa where my father and mother were raised. Would they be appropriate or of use in the school setting? Let me know and I'll act appropriately."

From Phyllis Harris, Ames

"What an attractive website the columnist in The Tribune directed her readers to. Having grown up in Ames (and recently returning after half a century in a neighboring state), I know that [actress] Gene Tierney visited Ames on a bond drive during the war because I saw her on the platform with dignitaries in front of the Sheldon-Munn Hotel. I'm sorry I don't have the exact date or year."

Editor's note:

The Historical Society website is being constantly updated - be sure to visit often to read new chapters in local history! www.ameshistoricalsociety.org

New Book of Norwegian Stories

Astri, My Astri: Norwegian Heritage Stories is a new collection of 16 Norwegian heritage stories published in English and Norwegian by Deb Nelson Gourley.

Gourley grew up on a 150-year-old Norwegian family farm in Amherst, MN and lives near Waukon, Iowa. The stories take the reader from immigrating in the 1840s to the last Sioux uprising of 1862, the flu epidemic of 1918, hiking above the Arctic Circle, the heavy water assault during World War II, Norwegian rosemaling and bunader, Syttende Mai and stave churches.

The book may be ordered from the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa, 563-382-9681, e-mail vesterheim@vesterheim.org.

Ames Stories – Interesting Tales & Unique Chapters in Local History

Some World War II Memories in Ames (from someone who was supposed to be too young to notice)

by Donald H. McNeil, December 2004

The 1940s were the last years of old Ames. The Great Depression and then World War II had frozen the town and campus into a time capsule much as it had been during the 1920s.



Grand Avenue, 1936, looking north from around 5th Street.

Great arching elms shaded most major streets (as they did until the Dutch elm blight came through in 1968). There were very few houses north of Thirteenth Street except on Grand Avenue and also along Burnett, Kellogg, Douglas, and Duff where a neighborhood extended as far as Sixteenth Street. The Cole acreage still sprawled at the northwest corner of Thirteenth and Burnett and the Tesdahl acreage graced the northeast corner across the street.

Our house was at 1222 Burnett, a part of the residential expansion between Ninth Street and Thirteenth Street that had filled in shortly after World War I. Our backyard was still graced by a goldfish pond and by some of the fruit trees that were originally planted throughout the neighborhood. Next door at 1216 Burnett, Bertha and Grandma Epperson kept their entire back yard abloom all summer with every known species of flower.

Farm fields closely surrounded the town, and soybeans were still growing at Fourteenth and Clark as late as 1950. To reach Homewood golf course one had to go out past a large farmstead near Twentieth and Douglas. Carr's Pool down by the Skunk River was similarly rural. The Meeker School site was pastureland and there were no shopping malls whatsoever.

There was not a single traffic light in Ames but rather a few yellow stop signs, each of which bore the black lettering: "Arterial Highway STOP". Quite a few streets

in town remained unpaved, including Twelfth Street east of Grand and most of Sixteenth Street. "Out in the country," only the main highways were paved, two lanes of steel and stone reinforced concrete having small round curb-like shoulders on both sides. The no-passing lines, where they existed, were positioned as stripes down the middle of the lane rather than adjacent to the center stripe.

Sixth Street ended at Brookside Park where the small zoo still held a bear, raccoon and a squirrel (in a genuine squirrel-cage exercise wheel), and there was a high-arching, rickety wooden bridge where Sixth Street crossed the railroad tracks.

Thirteenth Street ended at Northwestern, so the only through road between town and campus was Lincoln Way.

The Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Interurban provided some public transportation among Ames and Boone, Fort Dodge, and Des Moines. The Chicago & Northwestern railroad offered local and long distance passenger service north and south as well as along the east-west main line. Union Pacific trains such as the City of Portland and the City of San Francisco operated through Ames also. If a circus came to town it came by train and typically played at the fieldhouse at Grand Avenue and Lincoln Way.

In town, the "Dinkey" and the trolleys were long gone, but the city bus ran back and forth between town and campus day and night. The flood plains along Squaw Creek and Skunk River flooded regularly in springtime, but no harm was done, since Lincoln Way and the railroads were built atop berms and the remaining lands were fields and pastures.



Grand Avenue underpass, 1938

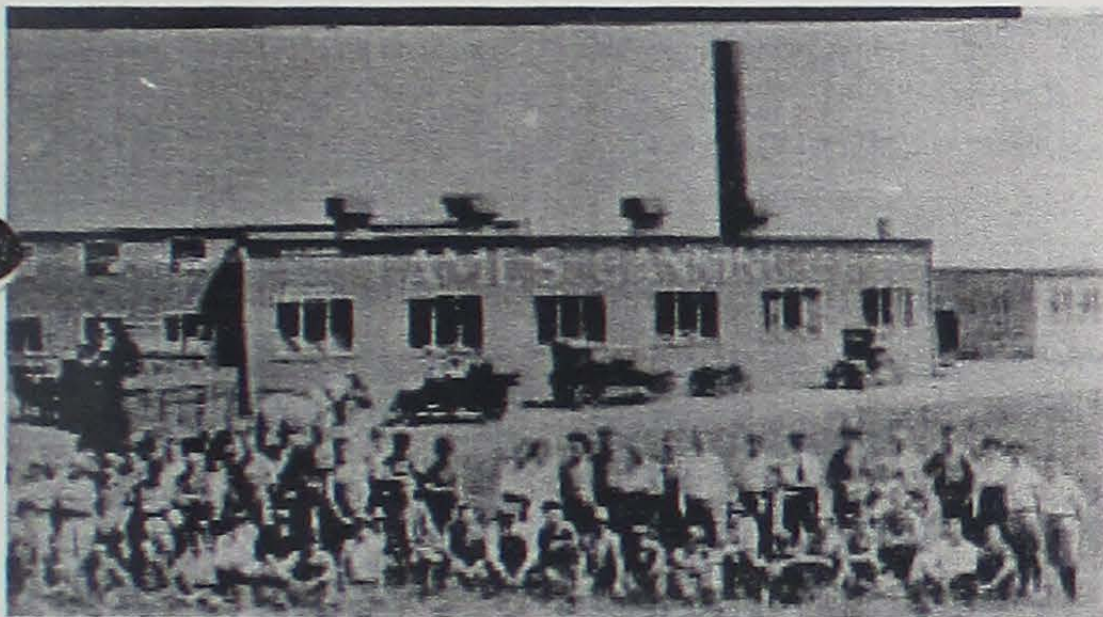
The underpass on Grand Avenue was new and much needed because of the amount of railroad activity, including 24-hour switching in the freight yards adjacent to downtown. (Some people, standing north of Fifth

Ames Stories – Interesting Tales & Unique Chapters in Local History

Street, said "downtown" and others said "uptown," but those latter folks also said "garaRge" for "garage.")

Ames prided itself on having no heavy or dirty industries and depended rather upon agricultural and college business for its livelihood. There were dairies — Woodland (at Grand and Lincoln Way), Moore Bros. (at Fifth and Clark), O'Neil's (in the old Armory on Fifth Street), and the ISC dairy farms. Whole milk in glass bottles (with cream at the top) was delivered early on weekday mornings, with Trow being a principal distributor.

Delivery trucks had replaced horse-drawn deliveries for the most part before World War II, but we took for granted that coal for our old furnaces and blocks of ice for old non-mechanical "ice boxes" would be delivered on demand. The canning factory operated day and night during the summer and autumn harvest seasons, with sweet corn as their major product.

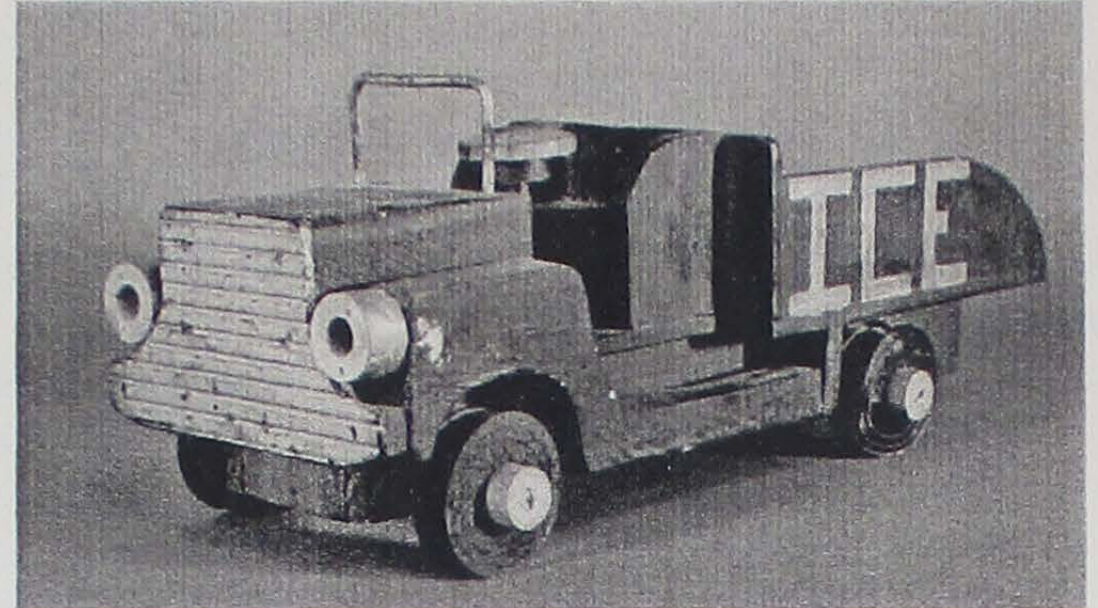


People could set their (windup) watches by the noon whistle from the canning factory. Canning was an important part of household chores also. Fresh produce such as tomatoes and sweet corn relish were cooked to a fare-thee-well, then vacuum packed into Mason jars, usually during the hottest few weeks of the summer (and before air conditioning). Cucumber pickles, apple sauce, peaches, pears, and cherries were also canned.

The most perfect delicacy ever canned was pickled peaches (with cloves for seasoning), a lost recipe that is sadly missed. A lot of the fruit that was canned privately had arrived by rail, packed in wooden "orange crates" for delivery to local markets.

One could buy fruit in bulk in small crates or in large double-sectioned ones, these latter being just the right size for use by children as tandem vehicles for make-believe. These wooden crates had pine sides 1/8" thick

and end pieces 1/2" thick, so that a great many household projects could be done with them. During the war years when manufactured toys were not available, wooden toys were often constructed of such scrap material.



A toy truck made by McNeil's father from scrap materials.

Processed cheese was sold in two-pound quantities in rectangular wooden boxes. With these, cigar boxes from Walt's News Stand, steel typewriter ribbon spools, wooden spools from sewing thread or adding machines, coffee cans and various glass jars, adults as well as children had plenty of raw materials with which to entertain themselves.

Town services in Ames were matter-of-fact, with a few police cruisers and two fire trucks. The old red one and a new white one stood side by side facing outward in the garage at the east side of City Hall. An additional truck was housed under the stands of Clyde Williams Field along Sheldon Avenue west of the ISC campus.

Electrical power was generated locally, then as now, from one power plant at Fifth and Duff and another on the campus. Telephones were of the standup variety with a mouthpiece atop the stand and receiver on a separate cord. Telephone numbers were four digits followed by "J" or "W" (ours at 1222 Burnett was "1508-J"), and live operators connected every call.

Two or more residences shared each party line; to have a private line was to be quite a snob indeed. Housewives kept their sanity, such as it was, by talking to one another on the telephone for hours at a time during many a day.



Don McNeil's delightful World War II story will continue in the next newsletter. Please stay tuned!

Introducing... the Curator's Column

In this issue, we initiate a regular column about our collecting and preservation efforts, and website enhancements.

by Dennis Wendell, AHS Board member and collections curator

At year's end, it is customary to thank all those who have donated historical items, equipment, or their time and expertise.

The year 2004 has been an exceptionally good one for documenting Ames history! A total of 90 collections were donated -- some encompassing hundreds of artifacts -- others a single, irresistible item -- all greatly enriching our archival, artifact, book, audio-visual, photograph and map collections. Although space does not allow a complete listing of donated items, the names of the year's donors appear below.

In addition, faithful volunteers have contributed over 700 hours of service! As this list is somewhat more manageable, names and activities are included.

- Perhaps half of those hours were spent by webmaster Alan Spohnheimer in bringing our new website online.
- Considerable effort went into organizing loose photographs in the Ames Tribune Photo Archive.
- Liz Smith, Ellen Stewart, Jack Froehlig, Sarah Dentlinger, Cecilia Finken, and Brenda Schmitt from the State 4-H Youth Conference began indexing "mug shot" photos and inputting entries into a computer database.
- Martha Rasmussen and SeoYoung Kim spent much of the year sorting and organizing black & white photographs and news clippings of individuals.
- A non-traditional ISU student in history, Alice Mellen, began the labor-intensive task of identifying and cataloging negatives in the Archive.
- Further effort was contributed by Veishea Community Involvement Committee volunteers, Heath Brock and Cory Hanson, who input several hundred names into the "mug shot" database.
- For a change of pace, Abe Schwager and Brent Schaub exercised their muscles by moving large, heavy artifacts to a separate storage facility.
- Deborah King, an ISU graduate student in Textiles & Clothing, spent more than half the year cataloging, marking, preserving, and re-housing our textile collection.
- Without exception, all Board members have contributed countless hours within their special assignments.
- Finally, numerous friends have contributed their stories, research and encouragement.

For all of these generous donors and volunteers, the Society is most grateful!

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Donors of Equipment

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**The Ames Historical Society prizes its assets - our artifact collection and our "membership collection"!
We extend our sincere thanks to all our 2004 supporters.**

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Museum Building Fund Grows!

In our January 2004 newsletter, we featured a story about the anonymous donor of modest means who stimulated establishment of a Museum Building Procurement Fund.

Since then, the fund continues to grow!

February 2004	\$1275	August 2004	\$3465
April 2004	\$2950	December '04	\$4298
June 2004	\$3455		



The Pacific Limited pulls into the Ames Depot, 1945.

Don McNeil's World War II memories will continue in the next newsletter: *"One source of entertainment was to go down to the depot and watch the trains, of which there were a great many; indeed, the first time I ran away from home at the age of three I explained my adventure as a desire to go 'down to see the t'ains.'"*

It's time to renew for 2005.

Membership renewals for 2005 are due on the one-year anniversary date of last year's payment, though we accept your dues payment at any time.

We are excited about our programs for 2005 and our work toward a larger facility. Your membership dollars make continued progress possible!

See the label on this newsletter for your anniversary date and the level at which you renewed or joined.

Introductory - first year	\$10
Individual	\$25
Family	\$40
Friend	\$50
Sustaining	\$100
Benefactor	\$500
Patron	\$1,000

Additional amount for Building Fund \$ _____
(separate check please..)

Send to:
Ames Historical Society, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010
Soon!

NOTE: We sincerely regret any errors or omissions in the membership listing on the previous page. Please contact us with corrections or questions.

Support Level: SUSTAINING, 2004
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